

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Ryan's Law passes final vote in the legislature

I was pleased to see that my Progressive Conservative colleague MPP Jeff Yurek's private member's bill, Ryan's Law, passed its third and final vote April 30.

Ryan's Law is named after Sandra Gibbon's son, who tragically passed away after suffering an asthma attack while at school, as he wasn't allowed have his inhaler on him because of school policy.

Two years ago, Sandra Gibbon and the Ontario Lung Association met with MPPs to discuss the problem of dealing with asthma in schools. After that meeting and finding out that school policies regarding access to inhalers differed across the province, Yurek first brought forward Ryan's Law in 2013.

Ryan's Law will enable students who have asthma to carry their inhalers with them. It will also require schools and school boards to adhere to a provincial standard when designing asthma policies. Strategies will be developed to reduce asthma triggers at schools, educate teachers and parents about asthma, provide regular training to teachers and school employees, and maintain emergency protocols for students with asthma.

Asthma is the most common chronic condition in childhood across North America. In Canada, three million individuals have asthma, and one in five children in Ontario has asthma. Unfortunately, 20 children and 210 adults die from asthma each year, but the majority of these deaths could have been prevented with proper awareness and education of their condition. Children with asthma can lead normal lives provided their asthma is managed appropriately. Since children spend 40 per cent of their waking hours at school, it is vital to ensure all the schools in the province are asthma friendly.

If your child has asthma, it's important to know what triggers their condition so you can do your best to avoid them. It's also important to educate your child about asthma and on how to manage and prevent it. Being informed about asthma will enable your child to live a happy and normal life.

Organizations like the Ontario Lung Association and the Asthma Society of Canada are doing a tremendous job through services and programs like the Asthma Action Program and www.asthmakids.ca. Efforts like these help raise awareness about asthma and how to best deal with this condition to live a normal and healthy life.

One again, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his hard work in getting this important piece of life saving legislation passed

